



JASON BROWN
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH
#DREAMU

March 10, 2019

Board of Trustees
President, Dan Barwick
Athletics Director, Tammie Romstad
Independence Community College
1057 West College Ave.
Independence, KS 67301

Re: Coach Jason Brown Statement for the Official Record in Advance of Hearing

Dear the Board of Trustees, Dan Barwick, and Tammie Romstad:

Please accept this letter as my formal statement in advance of your hearing currently scheduled for March 14, to discuss, among other things, whether to accept my essentially compelled resignation and the circumstances and events surrounding that. It is unfortunate and likely improper at a minimum that you have chosen to proceed without allowing me an opportunity to present, in person, relevant and probative facts to view the conduct in question in context. As such, I ask that this letter be reviewed, considered, and made part of the official record of proceedings. While much of this information is certainly best presented in person, in a confidential setting, I have been provided no such opportunity.

As an initial matter, I regret and have great remorse over my recent text message exchange with student-athlete Alex Alexou. I reiterate my prior apologies, and regardless of context and background as described more fully below, I should have handled the situation differently. Lesson learned.

Throughout my career as a coach, one thing I have learned is that the makeup of a college and a lockerroom is incredibly diverse. In fact, that is one of the best things about a college campus and program. The blending and unifying of such diverse individuals toward a common objective or goal is what attracts me to this profession, particularly at the junior college level, as we all arrive here from such diverse paths. This matter is the poster child for cultural differences and diversity, and how they can collide without any mal intent.

Alex Alexou is an international student from Germany. It is public knowledge throughout our football program that he often referred to himself as Hitler. It was a self-given nickname, initiated by him, used by him, and one which he actively encouraged teammates to use when addressing him. It did not originate from me, nor anyone else at Independence. Its intent was to make the statement that he was in charge, he was in control, whether tongue-in-cheek or not. Alex enjoyed playing into that moniker as well, as he would often walk around proud, often stomping the halls, with his hand held straight above his head mimicking the sieg heil Hitler salute. He was also a student-athlete

whom I put on scholarship, and literally fed him when the café was not available to him. There was absolutely no animosity or dislike toward him whatsoever. In hindsight, these types of actions, whether or not referring to someone from his cultural background, should have been immediately stopped and prohibited, not let linger on as if some insensitive joke.

I suspended Alex, in person, for a cumulation of actions he had taken. Shortly after this meeting occurred, Alex went to the academic building and proceeded to curse out teachers, and other students in the hallway in his native German dialect. Upon hearing of this further unacceptable conduct, I notified him that he was cut from the team and out of the football program.

Previously, when Alex's actions or words were unacceptable or in violation of team rules or policies, he would usually come see me and plead with me to remain on the team, and apologize profusely for his actions. This was the cycle. On this occasion, Alex instead opted to spread the news of his suspension and discipline via social media platforms.

Again, Alex's role in this matter is not unprecedented for him. As most of you are aware, I'm not the only staff member whom Alex has targeted for removal from Campus, as he also targeted Karl Johnson in the café in the same manner, taking pictures of the food, and videos of him cooking, among other things intended to demean and ridicule. Alex also has recorded President Barwick in his office, and has done the same to my assistant coaches as well.

On the date of, and prior to my text to Alex, I had seen that he had taken his Hitler infatuation to another level, and posted a picture on social media of the book he was carrying around, a copy of "*Mein Kampf*", Hitler's 1925 autobiography. (A copy of this picture is included with this statement.)

With my frustration level with all of his prior antics, and now this latest one taking his Hitler infatuation to another level (as also demonstrated by the expression of the girl's face in his social media post), I texted Alex the regretful phrase, "I'm your new Hitler". The intended meaning of this was simply, "you as a student do not run things your way; there are rules and consequences, and I am authorized to enforce them, not you." Yes, that is exactly what I should have texted to him, instead of my frustration-driven and inappropriate shorthand phrase I used.

Each of you know my background. I was a white child, raised in the low income black neighborhoods of Compton, California. I do not judge people based on their diversity, whether race, religion, national origin or any other such superficial descriptors. Seeing the "*Mein Kampf*" photos from Alex turned out to test my last bit of patience, and I was embarrassed that one of my players would flaunt such a book around campus, and refer to himself as Hitler.

I would never intentionally hurt anyone with my words or actions, and while my approach may be harsh for some, it has proven to be effective for many, many years. I am held accountable for my actions, as I should be, but I feel that this firing by way of compelled resignation was a knee jerk reaction by Independence, and the board should have more appropriately been limited to the 1st disciplinary action taken, the harsh letter of reprimand that was issued by Dan Barwick the Friday before my resignation. Trust me, lesson learned from my end.

I want to thank our community supporters and boosters, along with alumni, and CP2 families. You are simply the best. The support shown by this group throughout my time here, and especially during the past few weeks is what has made my time at Indy so special. Your passion and commitment for this program clearly played a role in the on-field success we were able to enjoy as the Pirates consistently led our conference in attendance and developed the best game day

atmosphere in Montgomery County! I encourage all to continue to support Indy, Independence Athletics, this football program, and maybe just as importantly continue to fight for it.

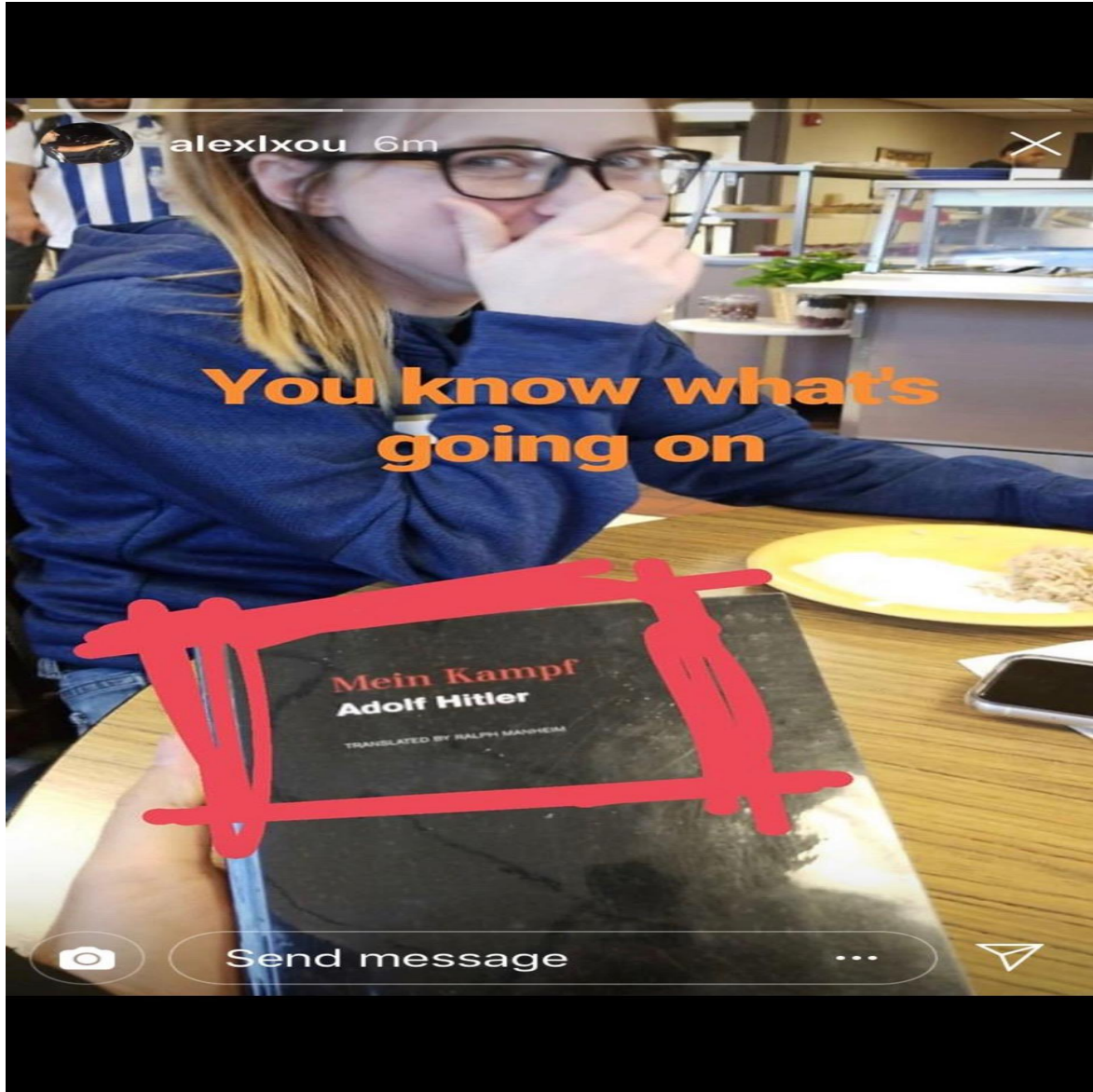
I would especially like to thank Director of Athletics, Tammie Romstad for hiring me, and believing in the process, and understanding what it takes to build a nationally recognized, power house program. History was made here, make no mistake about it! I owe all of that to you!

W.I.N. FOREVER! GO PIRATES!

Jason Brown

Head Football Coach

2016-2019



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